

Syria sceptical ahead of Christopher trip

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syria warned Friday it still insisted on a total Israeli withdrawal from the Golan and was sceptical ahead of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's second peace shuttle in a month. "Any settlement not based on the central issue of land is useless," an official in Damascus said. The official, asking not to be named, charged that Israel had "minimised the U.S. role by reducing it to a mere postman delivering the Israeli point of view without any amendment." The Israeli, during Mr. Christopher's last shuttle between Israel and Syria earlier in May, had proposed "security arrangements before a peace treaty, then a phased withdrawal over a long period," he said. But any peace deal with Israel depended on a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights. "Syria will not accept anything less than a total pullout from the Golan and southern Lebanon," the official newspaper Al Thawra said. The task facing Mr. Christopher, who arrived here on Sunday before travelling to Israel, is to "tote down the Israeli position and ensure the implementation of U.N. resolutions" on land-for-peace, it added.

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Israel leaves Gaza and Jericho 27 years after occupation; Palestinian police take over

Combined agency dispatches

JERICHO — Palestinian police brandishing AK-47 rifles triumphantly entered Jericho on Friday on the heels of Israeli soldiers leaving the West Bank for the first time in 27 years of occupation.

A convoy of overcrowded Land-Rovers and buses threaded its way through cheering crowds outside the town's police station taking 750 green-uniformed police to the abandoned Israeli military headquarters.

It was the first full transfer of power to Palestinians under the accord with Israel for limited self-rule in Jericho and the Gaza Strip signed in Washington last September.

The Palestinians also took control of half the Gaza Strip on Friday.

"As of now, you are the commander of the region. I wish you good luck," Israel's central region military commander, General Ilan Biran, told Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) General Hajji Ismail at the King Hussein Bridge.

They shook hands and the transfer of power in the first autonomous enclave was complete. Twenty-seven years of occupation came to an end.

In Tunis, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat announced he intended to travel to the West Bank town in mid-June.

The Israelis completed their pullback to border checkpoints around the 62-square-kilometre

zone. As the generals' handshake lingered, buses carrying about 400 policemen edged their way through the crowds lining the road from the bridge over the River Jordan.

They were cheered all the way by youths shouting "Allahu Akbar" (God is great). In the central square, hundreds more awaited. Women ululated, holding their children up to touch the soldiers.

Bands struck up and youngers sang and danced.

The Palestinians had already raised the red, green, white and black flag over Jericho before dawn when official buildings and a military base were handed over to 60 police officers who had slipped in overnight and Thursday.

Only half-a-dozen taxi-drivers were awake to witness the event. But word spread fast and whole families flooded on to the streets to hail their heroes.

"The Israeli flag had been brought down by the time we came in," said Ahmad Abu Saadah, a newly-arrived policeman. "There were no more Israeli soldiers left, we didn't shake hands with them."

The Palestinians took over the police station, military administration buildings, the post office, a court house, and a nearby synagogue.

In the 1,400-year-old synagogue three Jewish settlers



Palestinian policemen waving the Palestinian flag run through Jericho on Friday after entering the West Bank town to take

over security following the withdrawal of the Israeli army (AFP photo)

up and beaten by Israeli soldiers here. We feel safe now," resident Mohammad Sa'id, 42, said tearfully as he kissed a Palestinian policeman.

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The incident

U.S.: On-ground change priority in water talks

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Multilateral talks in the Middle East peace process were designed to deal with the practical issues and problems that all the countries of the region face, says John Herbst, director of the State Department's Office of Near Eastern Regional Affairs.

In a May 11 USIA Worldnet discussion with regional experts, journalists and members of the Multilateral Working Group on Water on "Conserving Water Resources," Herbst stressed that "one of the purposes of the multilaterals is to foster a dialogue among regional parties."

Listening as the many ideas, suggestions and issues were discussed and developed during the hour-long conversation, Mr. Herbst noted, "What we are seeing right here is such a dialogue — not just in the working group meetings, but also through satellite technology."

Mr. Herbst said that cooperation among delegates of the nations attending the recent water multilateral conference in Muscat made it possible to approve several concrete projects that can change water-use practices in the Middle East.

The satellite exchange also demonstrated not only the progress and the challenges confronting the Middle East peace process, but that participants are eager to resolve issues "on the ground."

Mr. Herbst said conference in Muscat approved a proposal for a desalination research center in Oman, an Israeli proposal for rehabilitating small municipalities' wa-

ter systems, an American proposal for waste water treatment and re-use facilities.

Among the other projects, including ones projected for Gaza and the West Bank, were a Norwegian proposal to study the comparative regional water institutions, and a German proposal to study water supply and demand among core parties in the Middle East.

All projects are directed toward priorities of enhancing the region's water supply, improving water management practices and conservation.

Mr. Herbst said.

"If we proceed with all these things, perhaps in the space of nine months or a year we will begin to see actual projects under way," he noted, referring to such projects as starting on building waste-water treatment facilities, rehabilitating small communities' water systems, and developing studies relating to regional water institutions and water supply and demand.

Looking toward prospects for cooperation in the future, Mr. Herbst said that "as Arab-Israeli peace is achieved on the bilateral tracks... other countries in the Middle East, as well as those participating in the bilateral negotiations, should begin to address those issues which affect all of them," and regional long-range economic development.

Shari Al Mousa, a Fulbright scholar from Al Beith in the West Bank, however, said a seminal question in such studies relates to information and data.

"It seems to me these data and the information that will

be provided to these banks will come from governments, and (that)... a necessary complement for these data banks is what we might call freedom of information," he said, noting that all water specialists "should have easy access to state records, to state data, to verify the quality and the reliability of these data."

"Are you planning anything about the freedom of information in the multilaterals?" he asked Mr. Herbst.

"At this point, I don't believe that there is significant exchange of water data between countries in the region," Mr. Herbst responded. He said the United States "has endorsed the idea of creating regional data banks; we will begin a serious process of exchange."

"We have also endorsed the idea of helping the Palestinians establish their own national data bank," he added.

"For there to be a meaningful exchange you need to have standardisation of data, and we've already held a workshop designed to help the countries standardise data collection," Mr. Herbst explained.

"This is a building block for future cooperation on a whole host of water issues. Therefore, it's an important step, but it's a step which takes a little bit of time, and we are pursuing it carefully," he said.

While the date for the next multilateral conference on the field mission conducted by a U.N. special committee to the region said that the committee was still being denied access by Israel to the occupied territories.

The panel, formally known as the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs of the occupied territories, based its investigation on testimonies of 37 witnesses with recent and first-hand knowledge of human rights' situation in the occupied territories. It focused in particular on the situation following the signing of the declaration of principles.

The special committee, founded in 1968 under a General Assembly resolution and composed of the repre-

sentatives of Malaysia, Senegal and Sri Lanka, conducted a 12-day field mission to Cairo, Amman and Damascus during which its members met with senior officials and reviewed the human rights situation in the occupied territories.

The special committee, which also draws data from reports on the Israeli and Arab language press published in the occupied territories, communications from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) concerned with the promotion of human rights, said that persons they talked to attributed the deteriorating situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to the "disregard by the Israeli defence forces for the life and safety of the residents of the occupied territories." It quoted the witnesses as saying the Israeli military systematically arm and protect settlers.

Another main reason emphasized by witnesses was "the continued existence of Israeli settlements and the increasingly aggressive and violent behaviour of the settlers who, in most cases, acted illegally and with impunity."

The settlements have been and are still being expanded,

and settlers, according to witnesses, commit provocative acts that violate the sanctity of the Islamic religious life, mentioning the Hebron mosque massacre as the most flagrant example, the committee said.

Another violation of human rights in the occupied territories, it said, is the closure of the territories that deprived more than 120,000 Palestinians who used to work in Israel of their means of livelihood.

The panel said that although more than 1,000 prisoners are reported to have been released since the Sept. 13 signing, "administrative detentions" and arrests had increased.

The committee was also informed that ill-treatment and torture of detainees, especially under interrogation, had continued.

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Home News

JORDAN TIMES, SATURDAY, MAY 14, 1994 3

Civil court orders Chalabis to pay JD6m for embezzlement, damages

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The file of Jordan's largest bank embezzlement case was reopened last week when a court ruled that Ahmad Chalabi and some of his relatives on the board of the dissolved Petra Bank should pay over JD6 million representing an amount they embezzled and related damages, interest and legal charges.

The ruling by Judge Mohammad Hawamdeh of the Court of First Instance was the first civil court verdict in the ill-famous case involving several hundred millions of dinars after the State Security Court tried and convicted Dr. Chalabi and his relatives/associates of gross embezzlement, speculation with the national currency and violations of the Kingdom's banking regulations.

"The State Security Court sentenced Dr. Chalabi and 15 others — most of them Chalabi family members and relatives and close associates of the Iraqi-born banker, all of them in absentia — to jail terms and imposed heavy fines on them. Thirty-two people, most of

them officials of the bank, were acquitted.

Dr. Chalabi was sentenced to 35 years in prison with hard labour and asked to pay JD4 million, the amount the court found that the banker had embezzled. Dr. Chalabi, who fled Jordan a few days after the government's Economic Security Committee (ESC) took over the troubled bank on Aug. 2, 1989.

An ESC-appointed committee ran the institution for some time and the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) pumped state funds into the bank to protect depositors.

The CBJ extended a total of JD254 million as advance to Petra Bank, which was placed under liquidation in July 1990. The liquidation process was expected to have been completed by July 1992, but the deadline has been extended to July 21, 1994.

In his April 9, 1992 ruling, State Security Court Judge Brigadier-General Ahmad Mango said the total amount embezzled was JD157.29 million in addition to JD29 million in shareholders' rights and JD47 million in expected losses — a total loss of JD233 million.

The civil court case, in which Ahmad Chalabi, Javad Chalabi, Rushdie Chalabi and Hazem Chalabi were charged with embezzlement, stemmed from a Jan. 12, 1981 transfer of

\$2 million from the Petra Bank to a local tour and travel company also owned by Dr. Chalabi.

The transfer, effected through a secret coding, was supposed to have come from Socofi, a Geneva-based financing company also owned by the Chalabi family. But no such transfer was actually made, while the Petra Bank transferred the amount to the local travel and tour company as a premeditated plan for embezzling the bank's funds, the court found (Socofi has also been liquidated since).

The court found all the accused guilty as charged and should pay the bank — meaning its liquidators — \$2 million and another JD4.583 million in damages, interests and legal charges.

It was not immediately clear how the authorities intended to enforce the court ruling in view of the failure in efforts to have the state security court verdict enforced.

The accused were represented in court, but it was not known whether the presence in court of legal counsel also meant that the accused undertook to abide by the verdict.

Gammoh says government will not lobby Senate on draft sales tax law

By P.V. Vivekanand

Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government is not planning to lobby the Upper House of Parliament to have its own way in structuring and implementing the draft law on sales tax by trying to reverse amendments introduced by the Lower House, Finance Minister Sami Gammoh said Friday.

The affirmation came in contradiction to widely-held views among economists and analysts that the executive authority would seek to influence the appointed Senate to scale up the general rate of tax to the original 10 per cent from the seven per cent as amended by the Lower House.

It was also expected to seek separate from the law a list of items exempt from the levy and to retain it as a Cabinet option to set the rate and goods, and to bring back a three-year period before the implementation of a full value-added tax system instead of a five-year period determined by the lawmakers.

The House approved the law after the amendments and forwarded it to the Senate last week after a heated debate on the floor, where Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and Mr. Gammoh tried but failed to convince the lawmakers to endorse the

draft law in its original form as submitted in February.

The introduction of the law is a precondition of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) before it gives a certification to clear the way for Jordan's debt rescheduling negotiations with Western creditors.

"We have spent more than 30 months discussing and negotiating the draft law and we are not going to waste any more time on this," Mr. Gammoh told the Jordan Times on Friday.

"We cannot attach a time tab to the enactment of the law," he said. "But we are ready to implement it as soon as it clears Parliament" and a Royal Decree is issued enacting it.

Notwithstanding government desires to have the law in its original shape as proposed, "there will not be any lobbying," Mr. Gammoh said. "The Upper House has made a thorough study of the law and it is up to the senators to decide what course of action to take while debating it."

If the Senate decides to reverse the House amendments and forward it to the Senate last week after a heated debate on the floor, where Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and Mr. Gammoh tried but failed to convince the lawmakers to endorse the

"It needs expertise and experience to ensure the smooth introduction of sales tax," said the finance minister. "We will implement it, and when we find gaps and loopholes in the law then we will seek to update it as warranted."



Sami Gammoh

debt rescheduling negotiations with the Paris Club of creditor governments.

"We are working on it," Mr. Gammoh said when asked what the government intended to do in addressing an already missed deadline with the Paris Club.

In the meantime, the government is preparing the ground for the implementation of the sales tax law.

"It needs expertise and experience to ensure the smooth introduction of sales tax," said the finance minister. "We will implement it, and when we find gaps and loopholes in the law then we will seek to update it as warranted."

Prime Minister Majali said

last month that the government would be able to meet deputies' demand for a raise for civil servants and for increased infrastructure in their constituencies because the government was hard put to make such allocations in view of the amendments they introduced to the law.

The government has said that the introduction of sales tax is part of a wider reform programme in the entire taxation structure in force, and that the enactment of the law would be coupled with changes in laws related to income tax, customs and other duties to maintain price stability in the market.

Mr. Gammoh corrected the widely-held notion that the House amendments to the law meant a loss of up to JD40 million to JD45 million from the JD170 million in tax revenues as projected in the 1994 fiscal budget.

"There is no definite figure," said the minister, noting that the consumption tax — which is expected to be replaced by the sales tax law — is already in force and the fiscal year is near its half-way mark. It meant that the revenues are being collected regardless of the description of the levy.

Mr. Gammoh estimated at 10 per cent any upward or downward swing in tax revenues from the figures projected in the budget.

Labour unions group elects new committees

By Natasha Bakhtari
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The executive and the central committees of the General Federation of Labour Unions (GFLU) held elections on Thursday evening after having been postponed several times because of disagreements within the administrative committees of the different unions involved.

Khalid Shreim kept his post as the federation's general secretary, and Mazen Ma'atibah was elected as his deputy.

Also during the meeting, 17 unionists representing the different labour unions were elected to form the GFLU's executive committee.

At the end of the elections, Minister of Labour Khaled Ghazawi delivered a speech in which he congratulated the winners and urged them to put their personal conflicts

aside in order to be able to work for the general interest of labourers.

He added that the ministry will publish the federation's regulations in the newspapers to eliminate all ambiguity regarding these regulations which define the GFLU's activities and authorities.

Outside the federation building, some unionists Thursday complained of not being allowed entry into the election site.

The group of labourers accused the GFLU leadership of practising bureaucratic leadership measures and charged that the elections were undemocratic, citing as evidence the police's prohibition of their entry into the building.

The labour minister urged the newly-elected officials to concentrate on serving their country to the best of their abilities.

A palette of vocal works comes to town for 2 nights

By Jean-Claude Elias
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A 40-member male vocal ensemble, Die Meistersinger Chorus, is a blend of distinguished, highly professional singers. Dynamism, energy and an extremely diversified repertoire are the trademarks of the choir.

The chorus will perform in Amman, with Julie Boyd as soprano soloist, at the Royal Cultural Centre, main theatre, on Saturday and Sunday, May 14 and 15.

Under a very Wagnerian name Die Meistersinger, conducted by their founder, Marvin L. Robertson, display an amazing palette of vocal works ranging from nearly

swinging rhythms to strictly classical, always performed with taste, finesse and balance.

"Meistersinger" is the name of the members of the German workingmen's guilds, of the 15th and 16th centuries, which had dedicated themselves to the promotion of poetry and music.

Die Meistersinger Male Chorus is from Southern College, Collegiate, Tennessee, in the U.S.

Dr. Robertson founded the group in 1973. Its members come from fifteen states of the U.S., as well as from Puerto Rico and Canada.

The choir is well-known in the United States and has



Die Meistersinger Male Chorus

Chorus, Julie Boyd and Marvin L. Robertson are invited to Jordan by the American Cultural Center in cooperation with Speaking Professionally and Rawdat Al Maaref College and Schools.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

King receives Israeli Arabs, Samaritans

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Thursday received delegations representing Israeli Arabs and the Samaritans sect living near Nablus in the occupied West Bank who came to offer condolences on the passing of Queen Zein Al Sharaf, the Queen Mother.

Princess Basma receives Swiss women

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Thursday received a group of 17 prominent and active Swiss women representing the Swiss association "Arc-en-Ciel Famille d'Esprit" (Rainbow Family Spirit) and led by Jan Barakat, wife of the Jordanian ambassador to Switzerland, at the headquarters of Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF). The delegation started their visit by touring an exhibit of rugs and ceramics produced by women who benefit from QAF's income-generating schemes for rural women. Following the tour, they were briefed about the social and economic development activities implemented by QAF through its over 40 community development centres. The delegation expressed interest in the Jordanian National Committee for Women (JNCW) and other women's issues and were given more information about the activities and goals of the JNCW. "Arc-en-Ciel Famille d'Esprit" was founded in 1993 as a reaction against global violence. Members represent different nationalities who aim to spread awareness and understanding among people of different races and cultures to create global harmony. The visit to Jordan is the first for this group outside Switzerland.

Artists bring cottage industry of Save the Children to new plateaus

By Rebecca Salti

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Bani Hamida Women's Weaving Project has reached a new dimension for its ninth annual spring rug exhibition with the added creations of 20 local artists and artisans. Especially designed by well-known members of the Jordanian art community, a unique array of rugs, wall hangings and cushions repeat the colours and complement the themes of a wide variety of original art work by painters, potters, sculptors and ironworkers. Executed in wool by hundreds of bedouin weavers, the weavings are on display for sale with all the other contemporary creations at the Jordan Construction Contractors' Association in Abdoun.

In a separate but equally eye-catching exhibition in a village opposite the association are the handmade quilts, bedroom accessories, wall hangings, handbags and other elegant crafts of the Jordan River Design Project, embroidered in refreshing spring colours by Palestinian women in Mahatta and Nafeef.

The two exhibitions show the work of many bedouin and refugee women involved in two projects established by Save the Children to provide part-time work for underprivileged women to earn supplemental income at home to help them raise their children. Both

shows are open to the public from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. every day through Sunday, May 15.

"We try to make each semi-annual exhibition more beautiful and interesting than the last," says Ghada Nassar, manager of the weaving project who is delighted with the results of the artists' participation. "Ammar Khammash and the other artists have brought the project to a new plateau. The weaving project team set up the exhibition with the artists, and he edited it."

"Here we are spanning a tremendous gap," marvelled Mr. Khammash, "between urban artists and bedouin women in a mountainous area, who are far removed, not just geographically, but in other respects. It's amazing that a rug has become the bridge. Suddenly, highly cultured leaders of aesthetics in Jordan have been invited to reach out to rural women whose lifestyle is still very much a part of Jordan's heritage — to partner in making a rug."

"I wondered what this Bani Hamida woman thought when she made the cushion I designed," he said. In the shape of a Three Star match box, the cushion is complete with matches that can be removed

and played with. "She doesn't know Andy Warhol and his famous painting of a can of Campbell's Soup, or that I wanted to do the same thing. She and all her neighbours have a Jordanian matchbox in their house."

"Most of the artists would not otherwise have mixed with their rural culture if it hadn't been for this exhibition which has pulled these diverse Jordanian elements together. The match box wasn't important. It was the process of interaction. The very elite artist living in an ivory tower had to learn the ability of a bedouin woman and the limitations of her craft.

"Wool is one of Jordan's resources. Similarly, Shishani has taken a stone from Azraq and made a wrought iron table out of it. Rula Atalla took mud from the valley and made a jar from it. But for the first time she combined mud with wool, because she had to go beyond her usual orbit of materials. The idea of mixing thread with pottery is very interesting," Mr. Khammash continued as he came to his large salmon-coloured bowls embellished with yarn. "Then she mixed leather and a blue bead (against envy) with wool in woven place mats — a perfect background for her glazed ceramic dishes to sit on."

As he came to a large display of paintings and weavings by Samia Zaru, Mr. Khammash went on: "Samia is a weaver herself. She has hung clay beads on the fringes of one of her Bani Hamida rugs, like tools to emphasise gravity."

"She has always been interested in textiles since I've known her," he said as he showed how she achieves a 3-dimensional effect by shifting colour and texture.

Studying the large painting by Suha Shoman at the entry of the hall, he said. "Suha's source of inspiration is basically Petra. She's spent years painting the stone there. Her work has led her to the archaeological writings drawn on the stone in the past. She

(Continued on page 5)

WHAT'S GOING ON

Foundation in Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.

★ Lecture in Arabic entitled "The Contemporary German Theatre and its Effect on the Arab Theatre" by Dr. Awfi Karoum at Goethe-Institut at 7:00 p.m.

★ Exhibition by Iraqi artist Shawkat Al Rabbah at the Italian Language Centre (9:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.) (Tel. 663348).

★ Exhibition of water colour paintings by artist Itab

★ Exhibition by artist Helmi El-Toumi at Baladna Art

★ Exhibition by artist Hisham Al-Banai at the French Cultural Centre.

★ Exhibition of paintings by artist Salman Al-Basri at Alia Art Gallery (Tel. 639303).

★ Book exhibition and cultural displays at the British Council (10:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.).

★ Exhibition by Iraqi artist Shawkat Al Rabbah at the Italian Language Centre (9:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.) (Tel. 663348).

★ Exhibition of water colour paintings by artist Itab

★ Exhibition by artist Helmi El-Toumi at Baladna Art

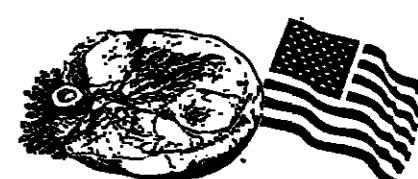
★ Spring exhibition of "Artists Expressions in Wool," the Bani Hamida project of art works and rugs at the Jordan Contractors Association Building in Abdoun (Tel. 612169).

Guess what's cooking at the Marriott?

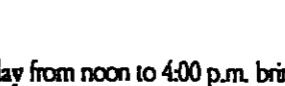
A lot at Al-Mansaf Restaurant where the evenings are sizzling with delicious appetizing specials.



Every Saturday is CHINESE NIGHT. Chinese specialties. A La Carte.



Thursdays are time for our poolside barbecue at our AL MANSAF PATIO starting from 7:00 p.m. for JD 9.00++ per person.



Every Friday from noon to 4:00 p.m. bring the whole family to the best BRUNCH in town at the Marriott. Price JD 9.750 inclusive.

Children below one meter eat for free.



From Saturday to Thursday, take a break from work and try our EXECUTIVE LUNCH, it's exciting, satisfying and incredible value at only JD 8.50++ per person.

P.S. ...Look out for our new Marriott Garden.

AMMAN

Jordan Times

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Established 1975

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Hopes of a new era

THOSE PAST days of May, 1993 will certainly go into the annals of history as a major turning point in the struggle between Israelis and Arabs over the land of Palestine. What has been happening during them reverses a 45-year-old trend that witnessed Israelis chasing Palestinians away from their homeland and trying hard as they could to silence their resistance. But the return to and the deployment of Palestinian police in the Gaza Strip and the city of Jericho cannot be seen except as a rolling back of the Zionist project to take every inch of Palestine and the Israeli denial of the legitimate and national rights of Palestinians.

The euphoric reaction of the Palestinian people to the deployment of Palestinian police in Gaza and Jericho and the withdrawal of Israeli police is testimony to the yearning of the Palestinians to rid themselves of occupation and to realise their own independent state.

In a few days, a Palestinian national authority, headed by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat will take over from the occupation authorities. The new authority, composed of Palestinians from the occupied territories and the diaspora, will certainly have as its main goals the realisation of the dream of statehood, the total withdrawal of the Israeli forces from all of the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, and resolution of the issue of Palestinian refugees in accordance with international resolutions.

The new Palestinian authority will face sure challenges, not least among them the building of the infrastructure of a state. But one of the most pressing challenges for the Palestinian leadership remains that of tackling the internal opposition, both on the right and left of the main stream PLO. Arafat had during the past week been trying to draw to his side credible Palestinians from both the occupied territories and the diaspora. For this he deserves to be commended. What Palestinians need now more than any time before is to rally behind their leadership and lend support to the new authority in its awesome task.

Even if Arafat and his colleagues have not gotten everything right so far, as critics strongly contend, what is needed now is for the whole Palestinian people to do their best and utmost to help transform the dream into reality and, along the road, to correct mistakes of the past.

Elsewhere in the Arab World, people might not be as euphoric as their brethren in the West Bank and Gaza because they did not physically have to endure 27 years of brutal occupation. But Arabs have to rejoice when Palestinians have managed to rekindle hope in their cause and are moving towards freedom again. Refugees, whose plight has been relegated to final status negotiations, are still apprehensive. However, as His Majesty King Hussein pointed out on Wednesday, we stand fully behind our Palestinian brothers and sisters, and we will lend them all the support that we can muster. Not only that. We also look forward to the day when the Palestinians are finally free and when we together can shape a common destiny and future.

The task ahead is enormous, and none of us can be overconfident about the chances of total salvation. For the moment, however, we have to be hopeful that the Palestinians have started on the road to liberation and prosperity.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily described Washington's favourable response to Jordan's demand of halting inspection of Aqaba-bound vessels as a victory for the Jordanian views which, the paper said, are just and legitimate. Though the American response does not fully cater to the requirements of the Jordanian demands, halting the inspection is a very significant step because it facilitates navigation from and to Aqaba on the one hand and saves the Jordanian economy from a great deal of harm on the other, said the paper. Needless to say, the halting of the inspection of vessels represents a retreat from former hostile positions on the part of the enforcers of the sanctions on Iraq, added the paper. Halting the inspection is a necessary step to ensure Jordan's return to the peace process as demanded by Jordan and a good and positive step on the part of the world community, which, the paper said, should now think about ways to compensate the Kingdom for the great injustice done to it as a result of the Gulf crisis and the imposition of the blockade. The paper said that it is hoped that the whole blockade imposed on the region would end so that regional tension can end and its people can direct their attention towards construction and progress.

COUNTRIES whose regimes do not see eye to eye with the United States are considered by Washington as helping and encouraging world terrorism and these include Syria, Iraq, Libya, Sudan and Iran, all Arab or Muslim nations, according to Bassam Emroush, a columnist in Al Ra'i daily. The writer said that it is the United States which continues to condone Israel's terrorist actions against the Arab countries in general and the Palestinians in particular. And by doing so, the United States is considered as the worst terrorist nation on earth. Not only does the United States offer mass destruction weapons to the Jewish state to kill Arabs, but it also protects the killers as the United Nations Security Council and other organisations, he added. Recalling what he called America's war or terror against the Vietnamese people, the writer said that Washington continues to practice the worst kind of terrorism against the people of Iraq and the Muslim Nations at large by trying to starve the innocent population through the embargo. He said that the United States is practicing terrorism against the Arabs and Muslims in the name of the United Nations and within the framework of the so-called new world order.

JORDANIAN PERSPECTIVE

The message in the bridge theatrics

THE PROTRACTED delay in the entry of Palestinian policemen to Jericho was no coincidence; the Israelis wanted it that way, if only to tell the Palestinians and the world at large in clear terms that nothing has actually changed with the Sept. 13 signing of the declaration of principles with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in Washington and the May 4 agreement on modalities of autonomy in Cairo. The Palestinians remain captive to Israeli whims and fancies and the occupation army remains very much in control of things; this is the message that Israel wanted to impress upon everyone.

For all practical and technical purposes, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres as well as a few others in the ruling clique in the Jewish state appear to have a genuine desire for peace with the Palestinians and the rest of Arab World. The motives and the terms that they seek may not be what we had hoped for, but the fact remains that they do want a settlement with the Arabs. But that simply not enough.

Since signing the landmark autonomy deal in Washington in September and notwithstanding the provisions for "final-status" negotiations, Israel has been sending very strong signals that self-rule could be an end in itself. Indeed, it would have been naive to expect otherwise, particularly in the case of a strong occupying power supported by some of the strongest powers in the world facing a militarily and economically weak people under occupation directed by a politically diluted leadership in diaspora.

It was up to the Arab World to pick up the challenge and shape things in a way that serves Arab Palestinian interests. It did not happen.

History will not forgive the Arab World for having pushed the Palestinians into a situation where they had no choice but to accept the dictates of their occupier. But that is an issue the Arabs have to live with themselves and it will also be naive to expect Israel not to exploit the divisions in the Arab World to advance its objectives.

But, having forced the leadership of the people under occupation into an uncertain equation, the Israeli leadership has a moral obligation to ensure that its actions are compatible with the requirements of an equitable process.

Messrs. Rabin and Company have to realise that there are strong elements in the Israeli army, down to the second lieutenants and non-commissioned officers manning the western side of the King Hussein Bridge, which are opposed to the

entire peace process and that they would like to do everything in their power, directly and indirectly, to throw a spanner in the works of the Israeli-Palestinian agreement.

Despite its shortcomings, the agreement happens to be the most tangible breakthrough in the peace process, and Mr. Rabin, Mr. Peres and all others who support it should appreciate that the simple signing of the accord was not enough, and that they should move on the ground to prepare their army and others to accept it. If they had done so in time, the 800 or so Palestinian policemen would not have been stuck at the Jordanian side of the King Hussein Bridge for six or seven days.

For us here in Jordan, it is very painful to see the vanguard of a Palestinian security force propelled into a situation where it had no choice but to go through the loops and jumps designed by the Israeli army.

Obviously, the main objective of the Israelis in posing one hurdle after another to delay the entry of the policemen through the bridge was to break the spirits of the proud men. The Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) soldiers have fought wars to liberate their land and have always held their heads high as professional soldiers regardless of the setbacks they suffered as a result of the ambitions of their political leaders. They are no less professional than their Israeli counterparts across the river. If anything, they are a notch better; they have not indulged in breaking the bones of innocent civilians or torturing children.

The Israeli leaders are mistaken if they think that the humiliation that the police force had to suffer at the bridge will indeed serve their objective. At this point in time, they happen to have an upper hand in terms of military strength and mighty high-tech weapons, but the human spirit and yearning to live in freedom is mightier.

The "technicalities" that the Israelis cited as the reason for not allowing the policemen across the bridge are nothing but a smokescreen and a pressure point on PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat. They have said as much in direct and indirect terms.

From what we could see from our vantage point, there is an ironical twist in the whole process. It is obvious that it is as much as in the interest of the so-called peace-loving Israeli leadership as that of the leadership of the PLO to see the process launched with the signing of the May 4 accord get ahead as smoothly as possible. On the other hand, the Israeli approach to the "technicalities" of the process appears to be clearly designed to undermine the confidence of the Palesti-

nian people in their leadership.

The Israeli demand that Mr. Arafat nominate his "autonomy cabinet" before the policemen enter Jericho has sent a clear message to the Palestinians at large that Israel is living up to the perception that the Jewish state only wants to consolidate its grip on the occupied territories rather than loosening it.

No matter how anyone looks at it, the terms and provisions of the Cairo agreement and the Paris accord on economic ties give Israel the final say in running the autonomy in all its aspects. It strengthens the theory that autonomous Jericho and Gaza are designed to be, in the Israeli view, a parallel to the "security zone" that the Jewish state maintains in South Lebanon and Mr. Arafat is destined to be another Antoine Lahad and the Palestinian police force another South Lebanon Army.

The experience of the policemen camped at the King Hussein Bridge since Sunday shakes our hopes that our brethren across the River Jordan are on the threshold of a new era of freedom and an end to their suffering under occupation might be ill-founded.

At this point in history, Israel, by virtue of its occupation, supported by some of the most sophisticated war and military machinery and the political leadership of the world's sole superpower, is in a position to call the shots. No doubt, it will seek to continue to do so in every aspect of Palestinian autonomy in the days to come.

Instead of advancing prospects for a just, comprehensive and durable settlement to the problem based on land in exchange for peace in the final status negotiations in two or three years, Israel will only be perpetuating and legitimising its occupation of the land.

By scrambling the situation in the ground, Israel will be doing nothing but setting things in such a way that liberation and independence of the Palestinians become nothing but a distant dream.

For us in Jordan, it adds to our pains and misgivings over the whole process. As a country and people, we supported and went along with the decision of the Palestine Liberation Organisation as the decision of the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. We still do and will continue to do so. But our agony turns more bitter when we see the Palestinian leadership being slapped down with one foul accomplishment after another.

Oslo deal was meant as a transitional move helping the Palestinians to embark on the first step towards fulfilling their national dream. He said that Jordan and the other Arab states ought to back the Palestinians, who are now assuming self-rule and limited freedom. What is required in the end is the full implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 but at the moment the Palestinians require all the backing they can get:

Sultan Al Hattab echoed the view by saying the one thousand mile trip starts with a little step. The columnist, who writes for Al Ra'i, said that the Palestinians who arrived in Gaza and Jericho will be waiting for real backing from their Arab kinsmen in Jordan and other Arab states. The road to full independence and statehood is long, he said, but there is need for the Palestinians to get support in order to reach the end of this road.

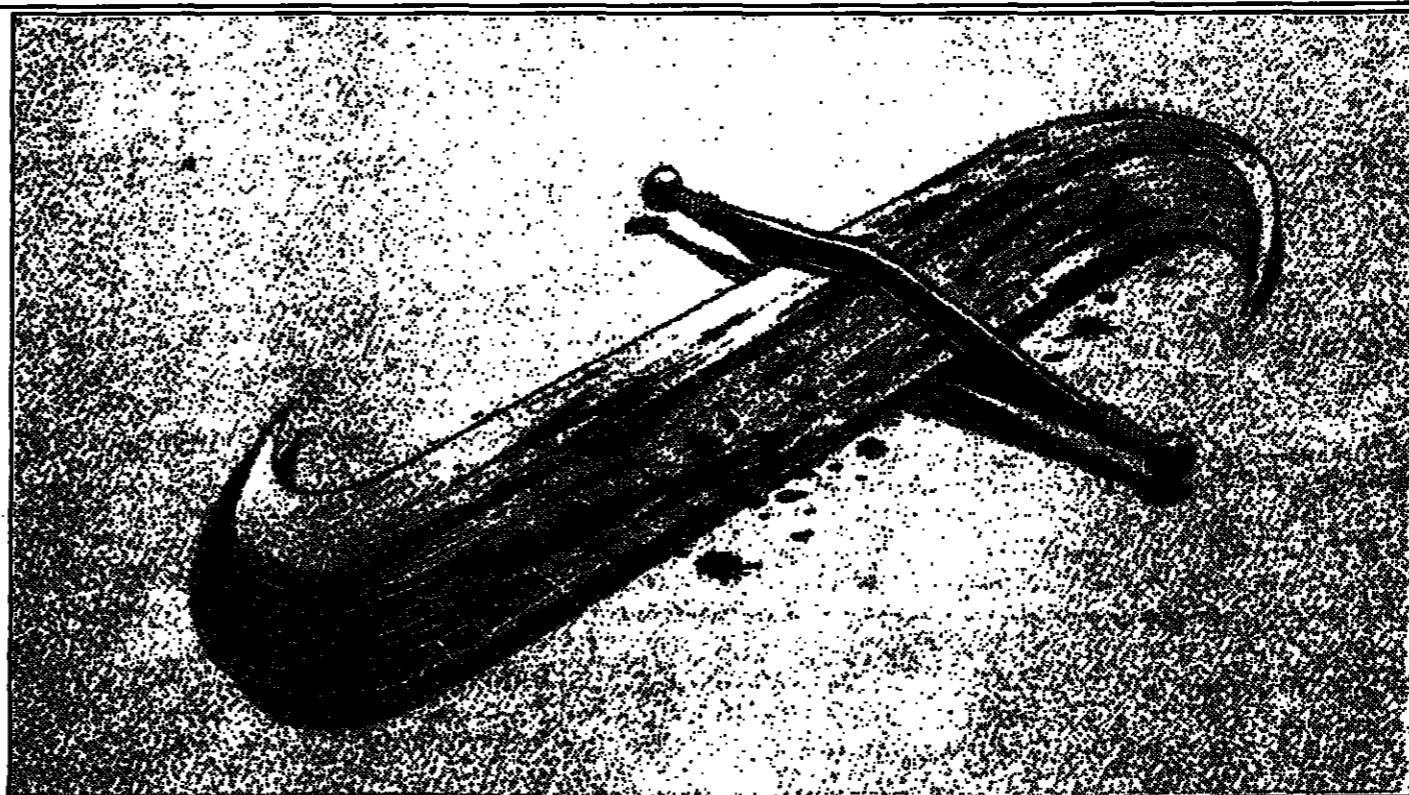
Fahd Al Fanek, a columnist in Al Ra'i, came out in full opposition to the government's recent measures that facilitate the travel across the bridges of the River Jordan. Nothing happened to justify the new measures which, he said, are bound to ease matters for Israel and not for the Palestinians. The writer said that with the presence of huge masses of Palestinian population in the occupied Arab lands, particularly in Gaza, the burden on Israel becomes great and the Israeli leaders would be forced to try to find a solution. He said that the government, while realising the plight of the Palestinians under occupation, should not make the matter easy for the Israelis by helping the Palestinians to come and settle in the East Bank. The measures are wrong and should be rescinded, said the writer.

pendent Palestine.

The suspicion is growing that the "closure", particularly as it affects Jerusalem, is not aimed at increasing Israeli security but at quietly absorbing Jerusalem into Israel so that it will remain exclusively the Israeli capital, in defiance of several U.N. resolutions. Some PLO leaders are threatening that if the "closure" is maintained, the resentment against the hardship it creates could bring about the collapse of the whole Israeli-Palestinian agreement.

While these areas have been criticised as being mere "bantustans", it is also being pointed out that they are not even bantustans, which had wider powers than those granted to Gaza-Jericho. Because of their "autonomy", daily life for people living in them is now more difficult than before. Because, for example, persons leaving them to go anywhere else now have to obtain not just one permit from the Israelis but also a second one from the autonomous regime.

What the West Bankers particularly and urgently want the PLO to do is not so much to establish an autonomous administration but to get the Israelis to lift the "closure" imposed on the territories which cuts them off from the markets, offices, hospitals, schools and places of worship in Jerusalem. The future capital of an inde-



THE WEEK IN PRINT

Yemenis should silence the guns

own free will. What is the use of raising slogan of unity by mere words and destroying this unity after it has materialised through shameful deeds, asked the writer. Arab leaders, he said, should realise that their masses cannot from now on be deceived with bright slogans and that unity can never come about with guns and rockets.

In the view of Fakhri Saleh, a columnist in Al Dustour, the Yemen issue can crop up any time in any other Arab society and country. He said that in Yemen, as in many other Arab states, the institutions have been set up on the tribal basis and not on modern civil concepts. He said that both

warring factions in Yemen have been able to reach power by support they got from their tribal friends and allies who, he said, are responsible for triggering the war.

Echoing similar views, Mahmoud Rimawi, a writer in Al Ra'i, said that the war in Yemen is a catastrophe for the Arab Nation, and has proved that the worst enemies of the Arabs are the Arabs themselves. The writer said that the devastating war in Yemen can enhance no unity between the north and the south nor can it achieve the national aspirations of the Yemeni people.

The war in Yemen reflects the political bankruptcy of

the leaders in the north and south of the country alike, said Mohammad Masalha, a columnist in Sawt Al Shaab. The writer said that former attempts of unity between Jordan and Iraq, Syria and Egypt, Syria and Libya all ended without the resort to war or civil strife even the unity between the two banks of the Jordan River ended legally at least without any disturbances, he added. The Yemeni leaders, he said, should have given themselves more time for dialogue and should have discussed the situation at hand before even starting a war of words.

The war in Yemen, said Mohammad Kawash in Al Dustour, is the making of certain Arab countries which do not wish to see the country united any more. The writer said that certain Arab states which have been dissatisfied by Yemen's stand during the Gulf crisis are now stirring trouble for its leaders and fuelling the conflict. He said that though unity should be preserved at all costs, the Yemeni leaders can still retreat from their present position and opt for dialogue to ensure that goal.

Commenting on the Cairo agreement by the Palestinian and Israeli leaders, Taher Adwan, a columnist in Al Dustour, said that the Arab masses are convinced that the

Why Palestinians were not joyful

extraordinarily lucky to throw up two big men precisely when it needed them.

That is why the South African struggle has ended in victory and that of the Palestinians is, at most, semi-victory, or, more accurately, semi-defeat.

Apart from the tremendous gap in leaderships, one other reason for the Palestinian struggle is that the present leader of the Palestinian struggle was in a desperate hurry to get an agreement, any sort of agreement, because he wanted to go home as a victor, and also because the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was bankrupt and the sooner it got a settlement the sooner it would receive the very large sums of money it has been promised.

What informed and intelligent Palestinians are particularly afraid of is that the leadership of the "inside" that has emerged from the intifada is, as promised by Mr. Arafat, going to be replaced by a new leadership from "outside".

incipient or not-so-incipient dictatorship of his own Fatah faction of the PLO. There were already mutterings about the "Fatah things". Little wonder, then, that leading Palestinian figures are backing away from serving in the interim Palestinian authority which, as usual hitherto, is to be nominated by Mr. Arafat.

What only fuels the genuine worry over the PLO's almost complete lack of preparedness for its takeover from the Israeli military authorities, as well as its inexperience, is that these worries are airy dismissed by Mr. Arafat with a remark like, "I ruled Lebanon from Fakhfakh" (a Palestinian district in Beirut), which only shows how far from reality his thinking, and his memory, are. This correspondent was in Beirut in 1976 when, at the request of the coalition of Nasers and Socialists then in power in West Beirut, the PLO assumed charge of an area of West Beirut, not of "Lebanon". But in a matter of weeks, the PLO administration collapsed in confusion because of inexperience.

What the West Bankers particularly and urgently want the PLO to do is not so much to establish an autonomous administration but to get the Israelis to lift the "closure" imposed on the territories which cuts them off from the markets, offices, hospitals, schools and places of worship in Jerusalem. The future capital of an inde-

pendent Palestine.

The suspicion is growing that the "closure", particularly as it affects Jerusalem, is not aimed at increasing Israeli security but at quietly absorbing Jerusalem into Israel so that it will remain exclusively the Israeli capital, in defiance of several U.N. resolutions. Some PLO leaders are threatening that if the "closure" is maintained, the resentment against the hardship it creates could bring about the collapse of the whole Israeli-Palestinian agreement.

That would be welcome to the majority of Palestinians, but probably not at the price of continued "closure".

Because bitterness against the very partial agreement reached by Mr. Arafat and his team is running high and strong, it came as no surprise to hear a leading personality in Gaza say of Mr. Arafat that "he is not Palestinian, he is not a Muslim". A comprehensive and condign condemnation. And as another politically perceptive Palestinian put it, "the moment the first stone hits Mr. Arafat's car when he returns, he will be stripped of his charismatic leadership; and there will be more than one stone."

Artists bring cottage industry to new plateaus

(Continued from page 3)
has tried to decipher these letters visually — not only what they mean as language but their geometric power."

Turning to the rug matching it, designed in tan, fuchsia and blue by Noha Mansour, he went on: "This rug has amazing complex shapes. Normally flat weaving lends itself to triangles, squares and stripes. But here we have the most intricate work. It's interesting to see how all these artists and designers have tried to push the weaving technique beyond its limits. The width of the carpet is also limited. It was a challenge for them to work with the medium."

As former production manager and now the designer of the Bani Hamida project, Noha Mansour learned five years ago how to design and execute rugs on the job, and many of the other designs in the exhibition are hers. She and Dina Shafiqo, the engineer who helps coordinate production, worked closely with the women on the mountain in the execution of the artists' designs.

"Nawal Abdallah is very much into composition," Mr. Khammash continued in his tour of the exhibition. She composes with a grid and has very successfully translated it from her two acrylic paintings into woven pieces. They are visual games. In every window is a different picture to look at. It's a battle between order and chaos.

"Reham Ghassib is a storyteller. Her paintings were done especially for this event. She uses watercolours like toothpaste in a very distinctive way that is full of spirit and very powerful. She likes brilliant colours and life — the loom, a woman spinning, a cat."

"She works free from rules," he said pointing to her Breugel-like scenes of bedouin women's life.

He turned the corner to a display by Samer Tabas. "Samer is a sculptor. (His work) deals with mass and physical matter. Artists work with surfaces. Samer deals with wool as another element provided by nature to be shaped. So his rug — a black and red grid on white entitled "Checkmate" — appears like an architectural sculpture in the same way his two paintings of graphite lines interwoven in grids, too. While Reham's work is a detailed personal

rendering of human behaviour, Samer's is a research of mathematics on how we can use wool and graphite to shape and weave."

"Texture and colour are the keys to Khaleh Kreis' paintings. He uses calligraphy in a way that some lines sink into paper and others come out and are thus woven in and out like a rug. His paintings are often monochromatic, so it was natural for him to do the same in his designs for rugs."

Looking at Mona Saoudi's bright runners, Mr. Khammash continued his commentary: "Mona again is a sculptor who deals with two dimensions. Her work, whether in marble, wool or ink, is geometric, emphasising strong lines. Her compositions are visually balanced."

"Fo'ad has worked in fashion design. He has an awareness of fabric. And as a TV producer, he's a colourist. As can be seen in these collages and water colours. His rug (in blue, pale yellow, red and brown with matching cushions) is composed like the "abaya" — the cloak of a desert shepherd in colours washed by the sun."

Coming to a large peach and pale green rug designed by Dodi Tabas', he took up his analysis. "Dodi is a patternist. In dealing with patterns, she has a great ability to execute applied art and to shift a motif from a painting to a rug. There is a lot of power and energy in the way she handled all those matching motifs and colours in a single carpet. It looks like an archive of Jordan with its camels, pottery and palm trees." A graphic artist when she first came to Jordan from Bangladesh, she also produced the colourful designer T-shirts on sale that depict clowns wearing seven different Bani Hamida rugs.

Another expatriate wife married to a Jordanian is Dzehla Khatib. Fifteen years ago she came here from Bosnia and has recently been joined by her family. In a separate room, her large rug woven in eight sections in rustic colours has been very popular with visitors. Nearby is a unique wall hanging designed by Luma Azar in black, beige, gray and off-white that goes well with a ceramic lamp by Hazem Zu'bi.

"Maha Abu Ayyash's sculpture is anthropological and a

bit surrealistic," Mr. Khammash said: "Her strong peasant woman in brick-coloured clay the former and her palm reading in metal the latter." She designed a large cushion and matching rug with an attractive diamond motif.

Noelle Shawa, now in London where some of her work is on exhibit, has embellished her paintings with large wool tassels to emphasise texture. "Her paintings look like frescoes weathered over time, the colours are so close together in tone," Mr. Khammash noticed. "They are cubical with strong emphasis on line. If you look at her carpets, they are the same."

Samia Halaby sent her designs from New York City, where she resides. They are on display with a large modern painting.

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"Maha Abu Ayyash's sculpture is anthropological and a

Police get heroes' welcome

(Continued from page 1)
had been expected since Sunday and rumours were abundant every day about their imminent arrival.

But to the surprise of most Jericho residents, it was the mostly members of the former Iraq-based Palestine Liberation Army's (PLA) Al Aqsa Brigades who entered Jericho and not members of the Jordan-based Bader Brigades.

Three hundred members of the Bader Brigades were transported along a road outside the Jericho perimeter to the Gaza Strip late Thursday night. But only about 450 of the PNSF members entering Jericho were members of the Aqsa and the rest belonged to Bader.

The Israeli army, which patrolled Jericho by endless helicopter flights all day Thursday and early Friday, did its best to

keep the Palestinian population far away and widely dispersed from the PNSF members entering the Jericho and Gaza districts.

The first batch of PNSF members to enter Jericho did so late Thursday evening. They were greeted by some 500 residents of the hot and dusty Jordan Valley town at the Arab Development Society on the outer edge of town.

A buffet dinner had been prepared for the first 23 officers to enter Jericho in what was the first sight of Palestinians in arms for most people in Jericho. Over half of the enclave's 17,000 residents are members of the Aqsa and the rest belonged to Bader.

In the dawn hours of Friday, 62 more officers followed the 23 and another 377 entered by 10 a.m.

Preoccupations delay accord

(Continued from page 1)
Saturday, shortly after the expected release of the details of the document.

Under the agreements, the committee, which will be headed on the Jordanian side by the deputy governor of the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) and on the Palestinian side by the deputy governor's counterpart from the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PECdar), will monitor and control banking and currency affairs in the occupied territories.

Jordanian banks which have already been licensed by the CBJ to reopen their branches in the occupied territories will also come under the committee's control and supervision. All future applications for licensing will be dealt with by the committee.

The sources said Jordan had expressed reservations over a no ceiling, free-trade arrangement between the Kingdom and the autonomous territories and but then dropped its reservations. The Kingdom had suggested a \$300 million ceiling for trade, but the PLO could not meet that volume because of the Israeli-imposed curbs in the Paris agreement.

"We decided to keep trade open-ended in the initial stage," said the Jordanian source. "We hope to develop it further as we go along further in our economic cooperation."

There were no formal meetings on Thursday. Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and the King's advisor held talks with the PLO delegation. No details were available on the discussions.

"We have forwarded the agreements to the PLO Executive Committee and are awaiting its response," said the Palestinian source. "We hope to receive the committee's endorsement anytime now."

"Hopefully, we could wind up the meetings early Saturday and release the details," added the source.

The self-rule authority will use the Jordanian dinar in all its dealing, the source said.

"The dinar will be the main currency in circulation in autonomous territories as well as the rest of the occupied lands," said the source.

All other currencies, including the Israeli shekel, will also be used, added the source.

The Paris agreement states that the shekel will be a "legal tender" in the autonomous territories.

Meanwhile, Israel completed a redeployment from all the southern Gaza Strip, apart from Jewish settlements which remain under army protection.

"I have never been in my hometown Jericho before," he said. "This gives me hope of a bright future, I will do my best to cooperate and serve my people."

A total of 9,000 are deployed across Gaza.

Jericho, most drawn from PLA, and named the Pal

Pal National Security Forces. About 1,500 will be deployed in Jericho.

"Yes, we're already to direct traffic," Mahmoud Yusef, who stood in the m

Jericho road, shakin

and embracing well

amid long lines of car

"We will work day night, all the time. We

need to sleep, we feel now that we are in our la

Israelis leave Gaza, Jericho

(Continued from page 1)

from the Al Aqsa Brigade said.

Mahmoud Musalam, 27, born in Kuwait of a Jericho family, was among the 700 policemen arriving Friday.

"I have never been in my hometown Jericho before," he said. "This gives me hope of a bright future, I will do my best to cooperate and serve my people."

Meanwhile, Israel completed a redeployment from all the southern Gaza Strip, apart from Jewish settlements which remain under army protection.

"Everything south of the river is in the hands of the Palestinian police," a senior Israeli military official said. The river, Wadi Gaza, cuts across the Strip south of the Jewish settle

ment of Nettarin.

During the night security installations were evacuated at Khan Yunis, the last town in the south to be evacuated following Deir Al Balah, Bureij, Nuseirat and Rafah.

Facilities in Gaza City were

stacked in a corner of the

southern defences.

Despite the claims and counter-claims, nobody here doubted that Dalea and its 7,000 residents had been dealt a severe blow, amid reports that the town's hospital had been evacuated.

He was speaking in an interview with the Arabic service of Radio Monte Carlo, the Egyptian government newspaper Al Ahram reported.

Mr. Mubarak said that by resorting to force Yemeni leaders were setting the scene for chronic vendettas.

Most of his criticism seemed to be directed at the northerners, who have refused mediation and have vowed to crush what they say is a rebellion by southern secessionists.

"Northern forces reaching Aden would not mean a solution to the problem... war will not ensure unity, on the contrary, it will be an incitement to secession," he said.

"Entering Aden would mean occupation... they (Yemeni leaders) are assuming that the matter will end but in fact I do not see any hope."

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Africa sets up bank in campaign to boost trade

NAIROBI (R) — Africa is launching a campaign to promote trade and woo back investors tired of the continent's seemingly endless political and economic woes, and investment bank official said Friday.

The African Development Bank (AfDB) will set the campaign in motion next September with the opening of the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank).

The AfDB, Africa's top investment institution, will run the new bank as a subsidiary charged with promoting intra-African trade, strengthening trade finance institutions and boosting external investments and winning foreign investment.

"As the only specialised regional trade finance institution, the bank will bring about sustained economic growth and will contribute to regional integration of our continent," Afreximbank President Christopher Edordu said in Nairobi.

He was speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the AfDB's annual general meeting.

"Our greatest challenge is to transform the bank from a nascent to an effective and viable vehicle for promoting intra and extra African trade from their present low levels," Mr. Edordu said of the new bank to be based in Egypt.

Africa's share of world trade now stands at two per cent.

Afreximbank will have

banks, financial institutions and private investors from within and outside Africa, Mr. Edordu added.

Shareholders held their first meeting in Nigeria last October after the bank was set up with authorised capital of up to \$750 million.

Up to 35 per cent of equity or \$262.5 million is held by class "A" shareholders comprising African states, regional and sub-regional African institutions.

Some 40 per cent or \$300 million is held by class "B" shareholders, consisting of African public and private banks and financial institutions and public and private investors.

Another 25 per cent of \$187.5 million is for class "C" shareholders, consisting of international financial institutions and economic organisations and non-African banks, financial institutions and public and private investors.

As of April 30, a total of 29 African countries had signed the agreement establishing the bank and so far 12 countries and three multinational institutions have ratified the agreement and deposited their instruments of ratification, Mr. Edordu said.

The operational objectives of the bank will be to:

Extend direct credit to eligible African exporters by providing pre- and post-shipment finance, to extend short-term credit and medium-

term loans to African exporters and importers.

Promote and finance intra-African trade, non-traditional exports, finance imports needed for export development such as spares and raw materials promote and provide insurance covering commercial and non-commercial risks associated with African exports.

Promote and finance South-South trade between African and other countries.

On Thursday, African countries and aid donors failed to agree on replenishing the soft loan fund of the AFDB.

In talks that ended late Thursday, the two sides came close to agreement on a replenishment worth 1.9 billion AFDB units of account (U.S.), or around \$2.6 billion, sources said.

But there was no agreement on which African states should be able to borrow from the bank, and which should be eligible only for the interest-free loans from the African Development Fund.

"No decision has been set yet. But there will be another meeting, probably in early July, presumably in Abidjan," a senior delegate from one European country said.

The AFDB headquarters is in Abidjan.

Donor countries are alarmed at the mounting arrears on loans from the bank, totalling more than \$700 million.

Congress passes Clinton \$1.5 trillion budget

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton's \$1.5 trillion spending plan for fiscal 1995 won final approval in Congress Friday with a 53-46 vote in the Senate, putting the country's budget deficit on a downward path.

"For the first time since Harry Truman was president there will be three years in a row of declining deficits," said Senate Budget Committee member Jim Sasser, a Tennessee Democrat.

The budget projects revenues of \$1.338 trillion, spending of \$1.513 trillion. The difference between the two is the deficit, \$175 billion.

The measure passed the House of Representatives earlier this month. It does not need a presidential signature, because it sets the outline for Congress as it makes final decisions on government spending for fiscal 1995 starting Oct. 1.

The biggest ticket items in the budget are social security at \$337 billion, defence at \$271 billion, interest at \$213 billion and medicare at \$161 billion.

The measure includes \$13 billion reduction over five years in spending caps on discretionary spending, starting with a \$340 million reduction in fiscal 1995.

Weekly analysis of movements and trends of major world currencies

This report is provided by Naser Nabulsi private client group at Merrill Lynch-Dubai. Rates are given as of Wednesday, May 11, 1994.

Overview

Fundamental view: Massive intervention by central banks last week and an apparent shift in dollar and trade policy by the Clinton administration suggests that currency markets could be at an important turning point. After coming under sharp pressure, the dollar has rallied to the DM/U.S.D 1.67 and JPY/U.S.D 104.5 levels amid reports that the Clinton administration now supports tight monetary policy and a stronger dollar to curb potential inflation pressures. Reports that the Clinton administration is backing away from its aggressive push for trade concessions from Japan in order to avoid suspicions that it favours an undervalued currency. That should help halt the general erosion of confidence in the dollar that had affected the Deutsche mark as well.

With the potential for Germany's discount rate to be cut only one more time this year following the cut on May 11, we have moderated our forecast for the Deutsche mark to a 12-month target of DM/U.S.D 1.75. We still expect Japan's trade surplus — politics or not — to keep upward pressure on the yen in the long term, and maintain our 12-month target of JPY/U.S.D 95.

Technical view: The Deutsche mark lost 0.5% against the U.S. dollar last week and dropped an additional 0.7% in early trading this week. Sentiment is neutral. Despite this strength and the fact that the underlying uptrend is mature, there is still some doubt that the currency rally is actually complete. Short term momentum has peaked, but medium term oscillators are still in an up trend, suggesting that a higher high later in May is still a possibility. First resistance is 1.63-1.64 DM/U.S.D.

Although short term momentum is peaking, medium term oscillators are bottoming. This, plus the existence of a potential multi-month base pattern, suggests that any further weakness in coming weeks could complete a longer term low and set the stage for an important, intermediate rally.

Pound sterling

Fundamental view: The British pound held steady against the Deutsche mark this week and depreciated with the mark against the U.S. dollar, recently trading near DM/GBP 2.49 and U.S.\$/GBP 1.49. The ruling Conservatives performed poorly as expected in last week's local elections. The length of John Major's tenure as prime minister is in doubt. Political uncertainty has been a key factor in keeping the pound near year-to-date lows against the DM.

We believe that U.K. base rates have bottomed, but we think they are unlikely to be raised this year because we foresee no upward pressure on inflation in light of significant spare capacity. March industrial production data were much worse than expected, showing a decline from February levels. Manufacturing production is up by only 1.7% over the past year. A modest up tick in U.K. short-term rates coupled with a series of sizeable German rate cuts should lead the pound up to DM/GBP 2.65 in 12 months.

The pound should also be supported by a substantial yield premium over German bonds. We expect the pound to trade at U.S.\$/GBP 2.52 in 12 months as pound appreciation against the DM is roughly offset by DM depreciation against the dollar.

Technical view: The British pound lost 1.7% versus the U.S. dollar during the week ended May 6, and was the weakest of the six major currencies we most closely monitor. Sentiment is no worse than neutral. The currency is now nicely back into the middle of its multi-month trading range.

Reflecting the intervention of the past week, short term momentum has peaked, implying a move to nearby support at 1.46-1.48 U.S.\$/L, a break below that would allow for at least a test of the 1993 low near \$1.43 and possibly long term support at \$1.40-\$1.42. Resistance exists at \$1.55. The DM cross-rate fell 1.2% last week after making a new 1994 low. Both short and medium term momentum oscillators are weak. Last week's lows at least allows for a challenge of 2.43-2.44. Resistance is at 2.53-2.56.

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

DRYIT

TINJO

LETEBE

ANSOOL

Hoony! Yippee!

We (sob) won — got a handkerchief?

WHAT THE STADIUM WAS FILLED WITH WHEN THE HOME TEAM WON.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

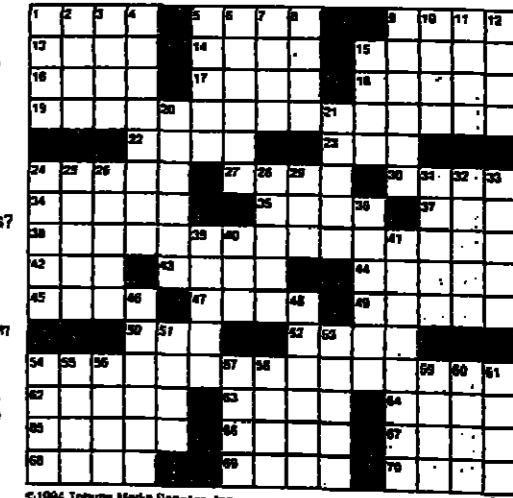
Answer here: **DRYIT** **TINJO** **LETEBE** **ANSOOL**

Yesterday's Jumble: REARM HOARD DISOWN CUTING (Answers tomorrow)

Answer: What were the little cowpokes doing at the corral? THEY WERE HORNSIN' AROUND!

THE Daily Crossword

by Dorothy B. Martin



Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

1. LOSER	LOSER	NAME
2. SUNG	UTHER	ABET
3. JAB	STIRIS	BEAMS
4. ELEENE	CEBAR	BRIGH
5. TUPA	JETTY	ORDAIN
6. RIBIN	HACHE	ALLAT
7. ALTA	SURAH	SEEM
8. SILEO	SILO	PILED
9. THERME	THEME	VALVE
10. BRAZE	BRAZE	AWARD
11. MALLI	BAIRE	GRANGE
12. BIALE	BAILE	IRIB
13. OLDE	BEAT	KEAS
14. BALE	BALES	LASTS
15. KEEAS	LASTS	BLIB
16. BIBBLE	SHAW	COUCH
17. CHIMNEY	CHIT	THREE
18. DRAFB	CHIT	THREE
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Peanuts



New massacre reported in Rwanda

NAIROBI (R) — At least 88 Rwandan students were massacred in the government-held southern town of Gikongoro and seven other people were hacked to death with machetes in the capital Kigali, a United Nations official said Friday.

"We have received reports of the massacre of 88 students yesterday in Gikongoro, a small town close to Butare (in the south of the country)," Abdol Kafia, executive director of the U.N. Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR), told Reuters by telephone.

"We do not know the ethnic composition of the victims, but this is an area controlled by government forces," said Mr. Kafia from the embattled capital Kigali, where fighting continued unabated between rebel and government forces Friday.

Most of the estimated 200,000 killed since President Juvenal Habyarimana died in a rocket attack on his plane on April 6 have been from the minority Tutsi tribe, victims of ethnic Hutu death squads and government army units, witnesses said.

Mr. Kafia said UNAMIR had also received reports that seven people were hacked to death by machete-wielding militia men outside the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) building in Kigali Tuesday.

"They were killed by militiamen by militiamen," Mr. Kafia said.

Kafia said.

ICRC officials in Nairobi were unable to confirm or deny the incident.

"All this seems to indicate that the massacres continue. We are concerned that when we gain access to more of the country, we will discover more horrible sights, more evidence of killings," Mr. Kafia added.

Mr. Kafia said UNAMIR had repeatedly asked government forces to allow hundreds of mainly Tutsi civilians to be escorted to safety from the Hotel Milles Collines in downtown Kigali, where they have been sheltering with the protection of handful of U.N. soldiers.

"We have tried it once before and were stopped by the militia. We will not try again until we have the assistance of the government forces," Mr. Kafia said.

Mr. Kafia said heavy fighting between rebels of the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) and government forces erupted in Kigali at daybreak Friday and was continuing at noon. The fighting was in the area leading to the airport east of the city.

The official said the fighting was predominantly small arms fire though there were occasional mortar rounds. Despite the fighting, Mr. Kafia was hopeful that U.N. relief flights would be able to land at the airport later Friday.

Belgian Foreign Minister

Willy Claes appealed to the United States Friday to play a more active role in trying to resolve the bloody war in Rwanda.

Mr. Claes said in a radio interview that the United Nations had not succeeded in resolving the Rwandan conflict and France and Belgium, who often spearhead peace initiatives in the region, were not seen as neutral in the ex-Belgian protectorate.

The United States, Mr. Claes said, was in the best position to try to broker a ceasefire between rebels of the Rwanda Patriotic Front and forces of the interim government in Kigali.

"This is why I have the idea of ask the United States to play a much more active role. I will have a meeting with the U.S. assistant secretary for African affairs, Mr. (George) Moose, with the priority of obtaining a ceasefire," Mr. Claes said, without specifying when or where a meeting would take place.

Mr. Claes said a force of African troops should be sent to Rwanda with the aim of protecting the flood of refugees under threat in areas close to neighbouring Burundi and Tanzania, a proposal also put forward by the United States.

"I think the international community could play a role in financing and arming that (African) force," he said.

The U.N. Security Council reached broad agreement late Thursday to authorise 5,500 troops for Rwanda, but is uncertain how many soldiers are available and where they will be deployed.

The U.S., still bruised after its Somalia mission, objects to a large U.N. contingent moving into the capital Kigali and believes the world body should begin with troops on Rwanda's borders and perhaps move into Kigali when fighting ends.

Belgium, which is reluctant to send any troops to Rwanda, withdrew its 450-member contingent involved in the U.N.'s first mission in Rwanda after 10 Belgian soldiers were killed. Soon, after, the U.N. withdrew all but several hundred of the 2,500-strong force.

Mr. Claes said the first U.N. mandate had been too limited, but stressed the world body could only be effective if all of the parties involved in the conflict wanted peace.

"We must not present the United Nations as an institution which can bring about miracles," Mr. Claes said.

He said Belgium had perhaps been naive in its U.N. mission in Rwanda, where arms had been freely available.

"But I prefer to be on the side of naïvety than on the side of the assassins who continue to sell arms, which are becoming more and more sophisticated, in big quantities," he said.



Tsewang Dolma (right), a Tibetan man, demonstrates the use of an electric torture device allegedly used by the Chinese as Francisca Van Holthuysen, a human rights activist, looks on during a press conference at Amnesty International in Washington (AFP photo)

China rejects Amnesty accusations

BEIJING (R) — China Friday denied accusations by Amnesty International that it engaged in the widespread torture of dissidents.

"Amnesty International is deeply biased against China," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said. "Its accusations against China are entirely groundless."

In Washington Thursday, the U.S. section of the human rights group said China used thumbscrews and electric prods on dissidents.

Displaying what it said were instruments of torture smuggled from the Himalayan region of Tibet, Amnesty urged the Clinton administration to "tell the truth" in the debate over renewing most favoured nation (MFN) trading privileges for China.

We will not allow China, the United States or the business community to pretend that the human rights situation in China is improving when it is not," William Schulz, executive director of Amnesty International USA, told a news conference.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman said his country was a signatory to conventions against torture "and undertakes the ensuing obligations in real earnest."

Amnesty, winner of the 1977 Nobel Peace Prize, said China had not met President Bill Clinton's demand for "humane Treatment" of prisoners. It said China had not ended "the widespread practice of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of prisoners."

In extending China's MFN

trade privileges last year, Mr. Clinton tied renewal this year to "overall significant" human rights improvements on a range of issues, including treatment of prisoners.

Mr. Clinton must decide by June 3 whether to renew MFN, which lets China's exports into the United States at the lowest tariffs available. U.S. businesses, among others, have been pressing for the extension, which is opposed by human rights groups.

Meanwhile, Chinese police on alert for any sign of dissent before the anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre have arrested two dissidents in Shanghai, family members said Friday.

Police came to the apartment of Yang Zhou, a co-founder of the city's Association for Human Rights, Thursday morning and waited for him to return, his wife said.

They took him away and conducted a three-hour search of the apartment.

Yang Zhou's wife said she believed he was being detained in a police station for investigation but she had been unable to see him.

Family members said another dissident, Yang Qinbing, was detained Tuesday but had no further information.

China, fighting to keep its favourable trading status with the United States, announced Friday it had released five more religious dissidents.

"Chen Zhumian, Yan Peizhi, Xu Zhihe, Cui Tai and Zhang Li were ordered to be re-educated through labour respectively between December 1991 and September 1993 be-

cause of disturbing social order and endangering public security by making use of religion," Xinhua News Agency said.

Friday's releases came one day after China set free another religious dissident months before her jail term was set to end.

Chinese President Jiang Zemin said five years of prosperity and stability since the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown have proved that the army assault on peaceful Beijing demonstrators was correct.

"A bad thing has been turned into a good thing," Mr. Jiang, who also heads the Communist Party, was quoted in official media Friday as telling Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad.

"As a result, our reform and opening programme has forged ahead with steady, better and even quicker steps, and our advantages have been brought into fuller play," Mr. Jiang told Mr. Mahathir in a meeting Thursday.

Mr. Jiang said history showed that the Communist leadership had no choice on June 3-4, 1989 but to crush the mass protests for political liberties and against corruption and inflation that had paralysed the capital and spread nationwide.

Unknown hundreds of demonstrators died in the dusk-to-dawn military assault in which members of the People's Liberation Army shot their way through the city into Tiananmen Square, where hundreds of thousands of Chinese students, workers and intellectuals had been venting their anger for six weeks.

Toilet gurus to gather in Hong Kong

HONG KONG (R) — Toilet experts from around the Asia-Pacific rim are to gather in Hong Kong this month to discuss the pungent issue of public lavatories. Presentations by Chinese sanitation experts would include "an inquiry into the culture of toilet," "practical means to eliminate bad smell in public toilets," and even "the history and development of public toilets in Guangzhou," the regional seminar's organizer said Friday. South Korean scholar Kim Seung-Hwan would also weigh in with an "analysis of the citizen's satisfaction on public toilets in Korea," said Hong Kong's Urban Services Department. Japan's contribution would include a relatively sober paper: "the investigation and studies of public toilets in the urban areas," by the Saito Sakamoto Comfort Styling Institute, the department said. The Asia-Pacific seminar on public toilets will begin on May 30 and end on June 1.

Drug runners 'used baby's corpse' — witness

ROME (R) — Drug runners asked a woman to smuggle cocaine in the body of a dead baby, Italian newspapers said Friday. They said the gruesome claim was made in a statement to police by a Moroccan woman due to testify later this month at the trial of seven alleged drug traffickers in Pescara, on Italy's Adriatic coast. The woman's statement, made in 1989, said she was shown the embalmed corpse of a three-to-four-month-old baby and told it would be filled with 1.5 kilos (three pounds) of cocaine.

The macabre "container" was to have been closed, dressed and carried in the woman's arms like a sleeping baby to evade police checks," Il Giornale said. It said the woman had been offered five million lire (\$3,000) to carry the corpse from Pescara to another Italian town but had apparently refused and gone to police. Newspapers said her statement was contained in published trial documents.

Thai censorship board approves Schindler's List

BANGKOK (AP) — The police censorship board approved the screening of the acclaimed holocaust film "Schindler's List" after having initially objected to showing the nude scene. "This film was produced with good intentions so it should be shown uncut in order not to cause distress to moviegoers," said Samer Boonyawan, a board member who voted to approve showing the movie without cuts. The board voted 5-4 in favour of not imposing censorship. Mr. Samer said the film depicted the humanity of one man amid the cruelty of war. The Academy Award-winning epic of a German industrialist's rescue of 1,000 Jews during World War II will premiere in Bangkok on Saturday, a week later than originally scheduled due to the controversy. The censorship board, which customarily deletes entire scenes or smears them with petroleum jelly, at first objected to a scene of about 10 seconds involving Schindler and his mistress. The distributor, United International Pictures, asked the board to reconsider. The distributor is bound by director Steven Spielberg's demand that the film either be shown in its entirety or not at all.

Another highly acclaimed film, "The Piano," is being shown in Bangkok, although large parts are obscured with petroleum jelly. The censorship board has been widely criticised for being out of touch with reality in Thailand, where prostitutes, hard-core pornographic videos and sex shows are widely available and the Thai edition of the U.S. men's magazine "Penthouse" made its debut this week.

Thais arrest 4 Russian women for prostitution

BANGKOK (R) — Thai police said Friday they had arrested four young Russian women on prostitution charges. The women, aged from 19 to 24, were arrested by vice squad officers posing as customers. Police said seven packs of condoms found in the women's possession was evidence supporting the charges.

The women, who entered Thailand on tourist visas, were facing fines of 5,000 baht (\$200 and deportation, police said. Government officials estimate there are several thousand Russian prostitutes in Thailand. Prostitution, though widespread in Thailand, is illegal.

New S. African cabinet begins to settle in

JOHANNESBURG (R) — South Africa's new "rainbow cabinet" got down to work Friday with ministers preparing to bid for their share of the pot of gold to fund development for millions of impoverished blacks.

Nelson Mandela, who spoke of "a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world" following his inauguration as the country's first black president Tuesday, was at his desk at the Union Buildings in Pretoria.

"The government is trying to settle in," a spokesman said.

Seven deputy ministers, including Mr. Mandela's estranged wife Winnie whose responsibility is for arts, culture, science and technology, were being sworn in during the day, while new provincial legislatures were presenting their cabinets.

The other ministers and deputy ministers were sworn in Wednesday.

Tokio Seiwaku, premier of the new Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging (PWV) province, the commercial heartland around Johannesburg, announced his cabinet comprising seven members of Mr. Mandela's ANC and three members of the once-dominant National Party.

The national government comprises 18 members from the ANC, which won 62 per cent of the vote in last month's all-race elections, six from the National Party of former President F.W. De Klerk, and three from Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party.

ANC Chairman Thabo Mbeki and Mr. De Klerk are deputy presidents.

A preoccupation of the new cabinet will be to get the ANC's reconstruction and development programme (RDP) under way, with National Party members — including held-over Finance Minister Derek Keys — closely watching spending.

The ANC projects RDP

More MIA remains found in Vietnam

HANOI (AP) — Investigators seeking clues to the fate of U.S. servicemen missing from the Vietnam War have recovered several sets of human remains, some of them believed to be American, a U.S. military spokesman said Friday.

The current field search has also claimed an American casualty. U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Robert D. Wolfe, 31, of Grand Island, Neb., was bitten by a snake as he was digging with his hands at an F105 aircraft crash site in Quang Binh province, 250 miles (400 kilometres) south of Hanoi, said the spokesman, Army Lt. Col. David L. Fredrikson.

Sgt. Wolfe was evacuated for emergency medical care to Bangkok, where he is now recovering. Col. Fredrikson said the snake retreated before team members could determine if it was poisonous.

Another investigator was evacuated to Bangkok last September after suffering a snake bite.

The precise number of remains likely to be those of Americans recovering in the current operation will remain unknown until forensic anthropologists review them later this month, Col. Fredrikson said.

Teams of American and Vietnamese specialists excavated some of the remains from helicopter and jet aircraft crash sites in central and northern Vietnam. Local villagers voluntarily turned over others, Col. Fredrikson said.

A fiscal review for 1994 projects a deficit of 6.4 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) and the new government is due to present the annual budget to parliament around June 23.

"The first test for Keys will be to see if he can impose fiscal discipline. It will be interesting to see whether Keys will be able to make them stick to the figures," Mr. Louw said.

The ANC projects RDP

Cambodia seeks military aid from Australia

CANBERRA (R) — Australia is seriously considering a request by Cambodia for arms and training to help it counter the recent surge in Khmer Rouge guerrilla attacks, Foreign Minister Gareth Evans said Friday.

Mr. Evans said his country was a signatory to conventions against torture "and undertakes the ensuing obligations in real earnest."

China, fighting to keep its favourable trading status with the United States, announced Friday it had released five more religious dissidents.

"Chen Zhumian, Yan Peizhi, Xu Zhihe, Cui Tai and Zhang Li were ordered to be re-educated through labour respectively between December 1991 and September 1993 be-

cause of disturbing social order and endangering public security by making use of religion," Xinhua News Agency said.

"Australia, along with a number of countries, has received a request from the Cambodian government for further military assistance, including training and armaments," Mr. Evans said in a statement.

A spokeswoman for Mr.

Mr. Evans said Cambodia had also appealed to the United States, France and several ASEAN

Khun Sa army claims victories in Burma

BANGKOK (R) — Troops of "Golden Triangle" drug warlord Khun Sa captured six military outposts and killed dozens of people in recent battles with government forces in northeast Burma, a guerrilla spokesman said Friday.

Reports from the battlefield have said our soldiers overran six Burmese positions and killed dozens," a spokesman for Khun Sa's Mong Tai

Army (MTA) told Reuters by telephone.

There was no immediate confirmation of the claims.

At least five MTA soldiers were killed in heavy fighting Wednesday morning, Khun Sa's spokesman said.

He said six of seven government outposts in the northeastern town of Mong Kyawt were captured during the five-hour pre-dawn attack.

Khun Sa's stronghold is in

Ho Mong, a town between the Salween and Shan state's long border with Thailand.

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Sports

JORDAN TIMES, SATURDAY, MAY 14, 1994

FIFA urges Japan to grant soccer star Maradona a visa

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — FIFA General Secretary Sepp Blatter urged Japan Friday to ease tough anti-drug immigration rules and grant Argentinian soccer captain Diego Maradona a visa, despite the convicted drug-user as "a victim not a culprit."

Maradona and his Argentinian teammates are set to pull out of the Kirin Cup tournament after Tokyo stuck by its stringent policy of denying visas to individuals like Maradona convicted of narcotics offences.

"It is my personal opinion that it is unfair for a government to continue to punish any person who has been convicted of such an offence but has served his punishment," said Blatter, who is visiting the Asian Football Confederation congress being held in Malaysia.

Maradona was arrested in Buenos Aires' April 1991 for cocaine possession and five

months later was given a 14-month suspended sentence by an Italian court on the same charge.

Blatter said neither Japanese nor Argentinian soccer officials had raised the controversy with him and the first he heard of it was when a journalist raised the issue at a press conference.

"It does not directly involve FIFA because it is a friendly tournament after all. If they contacted us we would simply offer them this advice," said Blatter.

Blatter also pleaded for a little understanding of Maradona's circumstances, which he said made him more likely to be arrested than anybody else.

"I ask you this, if he were not a footballer would there have been a problem because he most likely would not have been caught?" said Blatter.

Meanwhile in Buenos Aires, a tear-gas canister was let off outside the offices of the

Japanese embassy here Friday, a day after Tokyo officials decided to ban Maradona.

No members of the embassy staff were hurt in the attack, but two Argentinians needed attention after inhaling the gas.

The embassy offices are located on the ninth floor of the Rio de la Plata office building.

Leaflets criticising the Japanese decision, written by the self-proclaimed People's Revolutionary Organisation, were found in the surrounding streets.

The justice ministry's immigration bureau, however, granted a visa to Claudio Caniggia, who recently ended a 13-month soccer ban for his alleged use of cocaine. Caniggia would have been allowed to go to Japan because he had not faced criminal charges.

Argentina had planned to play Japan and France later this month in the Kirin Cup as part of their World Cup buildup.

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Jazz overcomes Nuggets; Atlanta smothers Indiana

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah (R) — Karl Malone took over the game in the second half and led the Utah Jazz to a 104-94 victory over the Denver Nuggets and a two games to none lead in their Western Conference semifinal series Thursday.

In the night's over game, the Atlanta Hawks smothered Indiana 92-69, holding the Pacers to an NBA playoff record low points total to even their Eastern Conference semifinals at 1-1.

Malone, who did not score in the first quarter, finished with 32 points and keyed Utah's decisive stretch run. Teammate David Benoit said that's just what Malone had promised.

Stich out of Becker match

ROME (AFP) — Boris Becker earned a free ride into the Italian Open semi-finals here Friday, when fellow German Michael Stich pulled out before their quarter-final with back pains.

Stich, the world number two, had complained of "a cold in the back" after Thursday's third-round victory over Moroccan surprise qualifier, Karim Alami.

On Friday, a report from tournament doctors said Stich was suffering from "pain in the

lower lumbar region and in both legs; with consequent loss of muscle strength." They prescribed muscle relaxants and pain killers.

Becker and Stich only met on clay once, two years ago in the semi-finals at Hamburg, when Stich thrashed his compatriot 6-1, 6-1.

The semi-final was Becker's top career showing on clay, his least favourite surface, although the three-times Wimbledon champion still has an all-surface career record of 5-3 over Stich.

AFC delegates reject Japan candidate

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — Delegates at the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) congress dealt a humiliating blow to Japan's high-profile 2002 World Cup bid Friday, when they rejected the country's top official Taduo Murata in two high-profile elections.

Murata, secretary general of Japan's 2002 bidding committee, polled only two out of 32 votes in the bitter battle for FIFA's vice-presidency which was won by his arch-rival South Korean Chung Moon-Jung with 11 votes.

Murata, who used English soccer legend Bobby Charlton and free bottles of 12-year-old malt whisky as campaign tools, was further stunned when he again came last in polling for his old seat as one of the AFC's four vice-presidents.

"I learned a lot of things today," said Murata after a roller-coaster day of elections which saw only one incumbent AFC official out of six secure re-election.

Murata's defeat means Japan, one of Asia's soccer powerhouses after the launch of the popular J-League last year, has no senior official in the AFC for the first time since Murata first became AFC vice-president in 1964.

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West took the queen and shifted to the king of diamonds, to avoid the ace. The ace won, another club was discarded on the ten of hearts, declarer came to lead with the queen of diamonds, drew the dummy's ruff and claimed 10 tricks.

Switch East at the other table was Arjan Rey. Looking at three low hearts, he realized the potential threat posed by dummy's suit, so he shifted to a diamond. Declarer inserted the queen (playing low would have been no better), covered by the king and taken by the ace. With dummy's entry removed, declarer could not come to 10 tricks. Even if South could have maneuvered two club ruffs, that would have established a trump trick for the defenders.

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Lebanon's crisis seen coming to end

BEIRUT (R) — Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri was expected to return to work soon, ending a six-day strike that has plunged Lebanon into its worst political crisis in nearly two years, official sources said on Friday.

Several sources said Mr. Hariri would go back to work on the understanding that his demands for government changes and a thorough discussion of relations with President Elias Hrawi and House Speaker Nabih Berri would be closely looked into.

"The crisis is over, the last details of the compromise are being discussed," a source said. "The prime minister will resume his work soon and after that all the controversial files will be put on the table and calmly discussed."

The crisis erupted when Mr. Hrawi and Mr. Berri blocked Mr. Hariri's attempt to appoint four new ministers to his 30-man cabinet to strengthen Christian representation, and to reshuffle other portfolios to improve the government's effectiveness.

They demanded a full change of government instead, apparently to reduce Mr. Hariri's support in the cabinet.

Mr. Hariri cancelled all his appointments and stayed at home from Sunday in a bid to force his two rivals to accept his proposal.

A source close to Mr. Hariri said his likely decision to return to work was a way out of the crisis rather than a solution but he was confident it would end soon.

He said the billionaire prime minister provoked the crisis in order to sound the alarm that there was a crisis of the political system, not just the government.

"The crisis is not a government crisis, it is a crisis of the regime," the source said. "Settlement of the issues raised by Hariri's action has been post-

poned but they will not be shelved."

He said the main issue was the lack of clear definition of the powers of the president, the prime minister and the speaker which tended to cause political deadlocks between them.

"Ending his (Hariri's) withdrawal from activity, which was meant to give a shock, is only the start of tackling the problems of the regime," the source said.

He said a cabinet reshuffle was essential to improve the government's political cohesion and performance and its efficiency in implementing postwar reconstruction plans.

He said an agreement on a clear separation of the powers of the president, prime minister and speaker had to be reached.

Pressure on the Lebanese pound on the Beirut foreign exchange market waned considerably as the crisis eased. Dealers said the central bank sold about \$15 million to meet the falling demand for the U.S. currency.

The bank sold more than \$150 million in the previous four days to hold the Lebanese pound stable at 1,689.5, they said.

The sources said Mr. Hariri appeared to have decided to back down from his demand for an immediate political settlement after Syrian officials failed to intervene directly to resolve the crisis.

Damascus, which has 35,000 troops station across two-thirds of Lebanon, has in the past mediated between the three leaders.

But political sources said this time they were disturbed by the timing of the crisis on the eve of a visit to Damascus, and possibly Beirut, by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in a drive to push forward peace talks with Israel.

"PRISON CAMP": Over 500 northern soldiers are held prisoner after laid down their combat shoes at a former resort in Zinjibar.

These fighters were previously serving in different barracks located in southern Yemen (AFP photo)

Jordan ready to give humanitarian aid to Yemen but no mediation

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein has reiterated Jordan's readiness to provide humanitarian assistance to Yemen but said the Kingdom would not interfere in the internal affairs of the war-torn Arab peninsula country.

During a meeting with Yemeni Foreign Minister Mohammad Saleh Bassandwa, who paid a brief visit to the Kingdom Thursday, the King expressed concern with maintaining the unity of Yemen and ending the bloodshed between forces loyal to South Yemeni leader Ali Saleh Al Beidi and Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

Mr. Bassandwa, who is on a tour of Arab countries to inform them of the developments in the Yemeni conflict, left Jordan for Damascus after delivering to King Hussein a verbal message from Mr. Saleh.

In an arrival statement carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Mr. Bassandwa praised the role Jordan played in trying to mediate the crisis between former socialist South Yemen and the Conservative North before the political crisis there erupted into full-fledged civil war earlier this month.

"Jordan entered the Yemeni history" when in February it hosted the signing of a reconciliation agreement between Mr. Saleh and Mr. Beidi, said Mr. Bassandwa.

He also thanked the Kingdom for treating some of the wounded in the war, which has claimed thousands of casualties since it started 11 days ago.

Jordan has also sent a medical team to help treat war victims.

After the war erupted, North Yemen rejected any foreign mediation effort, insisting on a military settlement of the conflict, but indicated it would accept a negotiated settlement to the crisis after it had become clear that it will not be able to achieve a military victory.

Mr. Bassandwa said that his delegation was on its way to Sanaa in a bid to end the conflict but Mr. Bassandwa said the league did not offer mediation. Its delegation would only "review developments in the situation in Yemen," he said.

Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali has said that Jordan would not mediate in the conflict unless both parties to it agree on the Kingdom's role, adding that Jordan would not "interfere in support of either parties to the crisis."

Dr. Majali said King Hussein had telephoned both Mr. Beidi and Mr. Saleh in a bid to end the fighting but North Yemen sees any foreign intervention as meddling in its internal affairs.

Jordan has evacuated over 750 Jordanians from Yemen on board military aircraft, and Royal Jordanian (RJ) airliners. RJ has halted its flights to the country, which observers say would be dragged into a protracted civil war unless a negotiated settlement is found.

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Arafat's cabinet holds a few surprises

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Arafat himself was unuttered by the three key leaders' negative comments about the agreement, and instead had challenged them to either join him to shoulder the responsibility or confine themselves to the role of disgruntled observers.

"Arafat has been calling each nominee, especially the ones who oppose the Cairo agreement, and urging them not to abandon him at this critical stage," one PLO official said.

According to different accounts, the master tactician has been effectively challenging his critics to join him to face the task of building a Palestinian state instead of taking "the easy way out."

Israeli threats to delay the entry of Palestinian police if a Palestinian authority was not declared and the enormous shift of the mood in the occupied territories in favour of the agreement have contributed to mellowing the initially vehement opposition to the provisions of the deal.

Mr. Hussein, however, is said to have asked for assurances that his authority as leader of Fatah in the West Bank should not continue to be marginalised and bypassed by Mr. Arafat, who has been using other channels to convey orders and instructions to the organisation.

Furthermore, the position of Mr. Hussein and Dr. Erekat is to a large extent reflective of the stand of the Fatah organisation in the West Bank, that insists on being represented in the Palestinian authority.

According to information available from the West Bank, some influential Fatah rank and file, including young deportees who were allowed to return last month had urged Mr. Hussein and Dr. Erekat to accept.

Information available from Tunis and the occupied territories also suggest that many Fatah leaders feared that by boycotting the authority, the actual leadership will be confined to "traditional personalities" that have already accepted Mr. Arafat's offer dealing a blow to Fatah.

Faced with reluctance by the historic leaders of the pro-PLO groups in the occupied territories, Mr. Arafat went straight to more traditional and conservative figures, sending alarms among the Fatah rank and file.

According to well-placed officials, Fatah officials strongly protested Mr. Arafat's attempt to appoint Jamil Tarif, head of the Palestinian liaison committee with Israel, but who is not seen as part of

the more militant leadership that secured and sustained support for the PLO over the years.

As names of members of the Palestinian authorities were starting to leak, many feared that it will be a weak body that would further consolidate Mr. Arafat's domination and will not challenge further concession to the Israelis.

Yet, it remains to be seen how Mr. Hussein, Dr. Erekat and Dr. Ashrawi will reconcile between their misgivings about the agreement and being members of the body entrusted with implementing it. Well-informed Palestinian sources said that the three feel that they could influence the continuing process of negotiations, instead of leaving it to Mr. Arafat and a small circle of aides in the hope that future steps will pave the way for Palestinian sovereignty.

Other PLO officials were very critical of what they viewed as the contradictory position of the three leaders, who confined themselves to verbal protest but "towed the line" in the end.

Opposition officials, however, declined from attacking any of the persons who accepted to join.

It was a sign that even the opposition hopes that the presence of outspoken critical members in the authority will pressure Mr. Arafat to yield some authority and not to block elections as many fear he would.

So far the Palestinian authority is basically a coalition of Fatah and independents. The major other group is the Palestinian Democratic Union, FIDA, led by Yasser Abed Rabbo.

It was still unclear whether Mr. Abed Rabbo himself will join or confine FIDA's representation to personalities from the occupied territories.

Azmi Shoaibi, FIDA's leader in the West Bank, was already included in the authority and FIDA officials Sami al Khatib and Zahira Kamal are strong nominees.

If Ms. Kamal is appointed, the Palestinian authority will include three women.

FIDA has publicly condemned the Cairo agreement but nevertheless decided to join the authority.

The Palestine People's Party (PPP), which has boycotted the last rounds of negotiations, has maintained its stand of refusing to be part of the authority.

Agencies add: PLO difficulties in naming a full slate of 24 members for the Palestinian National Authority has become the latest snag in the much-delayed self-rule plan

agreed last September.

The list so far includes Mr. Arafat, PLO Executive Committee members Samir Ghoshe and Yasser Arafat, chief economist Ahmad Qourie, two deportees and many of the prominent Palestinians who have taken part in peace talks with Israel since 1991, PLO negotiator Nabil Shaath said.

Asked if all the nominees had agreed, he said: "None of these names is nominated without being fully negotiated first."

The PLO executive committee had approved all of them, Dr. Shaath added at a news conference in Cairo.

Dr. Shaath transmitted the list to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on Thursday afternoon and Israeli consent to it was only a formality, he said.

Dr. Shaath said Mr. Arafat would appoint the remaining nine members within a week.

Asked why the PLO decided to send an incomplete list, he said: "It's because there was a need by the Israelis to be assured on our seriousness in starting to conduct the authority's business."

The PLO has spent much longer than expected making the nominations, which the Israelis had originally hoped to receive about the same time as the signing ceremony on May 4.

Other members including Dr. Shaath himself, Zakaria Al Agha and Freih Abu Meidan from Gaza, Riyad Zazzoun, Bethlehem Mayor Elias Freij and deportee Abdul Aziz Al Haj Ahmad.

Dr. Shaath said he expected the Palestinian authority would be in place in Gaza and Jericho by next Tuesday but it is too early to say which members would have which responsibilities.

He said he himself had been reluctant to take part but did not feel he could refuse at this stage in the peace talks.

Dr. Shaath also said that the signing of agreement in Cairo has triggered a "faster pace of fund giving" by Western nations.

He disclosed new donations including 14 million francs (\$2.45 million) from France for a police communications system, \$2 million from South Korea for computers and other equipment and 58 military vehicles from Greece.

He said that 176 jeeps and trucks donated by the United States for the police from their European stock would arrive in Egypt next Sunday.

The police have been hampered by a shortage of vehicles.

With Garang's group ...

they do not recognise the agreements which we reached in each session of negotiations," said Gen. Bashir, the leader of Sudan's military government which is fighting mainly Christian and animist southern rebels.

In negotiations with other groups, we find that we negotiate on all issues on the agenda and everything that we agree on continues to be valid," Gen. Bashir said.

Mr. Riek's split from Garang triggered an internal war between the two southern factions, divided along tribal lines.

Mr. Riek has repeatedly denied Col. Garang's accusation that he grants government soldiers safe passage through his territory to attack Col. Garang's troops.

Gen. Bashir, in Nairobi for the African Development Bank's 30th anniversary celebrations, will not take part

bers were shooting dead an average of about 10 policemen a month.

Gunmen wounded two policemen in the southern province of Sohag on May 4 and attacked a police station in Assiut province on May 9 wounding two passers-by.

Security sources say that in raids based on information collected from Hammam's flat, the Egyptian authorities have arrested at least 20 people linked with the militant leader.

Interior Minister Hassan Al Alfie is expected to announce details of the latest arrests on Saturday.

He had originally promised to make the announcement on Thursday but the security sources said he postponed it to follow up new information.

The Gama's says its aim is to overthrow the government and set up a strict Islamic state.

Its main activities have been attacking policemen, bombing banks and trying to wreck Egypt's lucrative tourist industry by shooting at buses, trains and Nile cruises.

Government ministers have repeatedly said they have the movement under control but the Gama's has just as often risen from the ashes to fight back.

At the time of Hammam's death, the Interior Ministry said it had seized the fax machine used to send out Gama's statements. But statements in the same format arrived from another machine two days later.

Police said they suspected members of the Gama's.

Southern Egypt, the main theatre for Gama's operations, had been relatively quiet since police killed militant leader Talaat Yassin Hammam in a Cairo flat on April 25.

The policemen were the first killed in Egypt since April 27. Earlier this year Gama's members

stole two Kalashnikov assault rifles from the dead policemen and fled, they added.

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